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LTR TO DCI William Casey
from former DCI William Colby

Dec 23, 1981

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December 23, 1981

The Honorable William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Bill,

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, Section 814, provides that former spouses of Foreign Service personnel under the Act will receive a certain percentage of the retirement benefits of their spouse from the system if they had been married during at least ten years of their spouse's creditable service. The rationale for this change in the Foreign Service Act was that the nature of the Foreign Service calls upon the spouse to participate actively in the diplomatic life of her husband and that she is subject to substantial handicaps in following another career or developing a work experience which will prepare her to meet the challenges of later life. A later divorce, the Congress decided, should not take from her the recognition due her contribution to the Foreign Service.

That amendment does not, of course, apply to CIA spouses, since most CIA personnel fall under the Civil Service retirement procedures with respect to spousal rights, even with respect to those admitted to the CIA Retirement and Disability System (CIARDS). The situation of those under CIARDS, however, is at least comparable if not more persuasive in the contribution that a CIA spouse provides to her husband's operational performance overseas. Several wives and former spouses have given this matter considerable thought and have suggested an analogous amendment to the CIA retirement system (CIARDS), which they have requested me to help them present.

We have developed the attached letters to the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence, urging this amendment to the CIARDS System. The accompanying experiences of individual spouses make a strong case for such recognition of the contributions of CIA spouses abroad. Since the material does, however, discuss the manner in which a number of former spouses have assisted their husbands in their operational activities, the Agency might wish to classify this material.

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It is for this reason that we send this package to you in the hopes that you will review it and be persuaded by its logic sufficiently to support the position outlined therein. In any case, we would hope that you would review the material and determine whether all or any part of it should be classified before it is sent to the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence so that it could be handled by them as classified material. Even in classified form, of course, it could be made available to the members of those Committees for their consideration of the merits of the proposal made. We would, of course, conform our copies of these original letters to respect your decision with respect to their classification.

Since we would like to submit this material for consideration by the new Congress, we would hope that your review of this package could be accomplished by January 20, 1982. I am at the disposal of yourself or your staff to discuss any aspects of the matter which you might desire.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby

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